1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers.

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists.

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking
of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the 294
case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because
there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm
and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer
had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to
teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy
for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go
live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap,
then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut.
If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give
him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach
him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-
five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy
was given his indenture papers which meant he could set him-
self up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money
to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else
and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time
of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be
sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could
set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with
because it required no money to start with. In the old days the
tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and
make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next
house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally 326
I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make
shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

463 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any
326 strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration
554 the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around
294 from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local
286 craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even
[283] in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

463 759 476 [656]

Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has
about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
431 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the
754 farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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explanation. It is true that they occur in Anglesea and in parts of the Scottish lowlands, but in both cases they are likely to be due to Irish influence. It seems to me more probable that an indigenous custom was taken up and diffused by improving landlords. I like to think of the Irish rath defended and glorified by two white stone pillars at the entrance, though I confess that this finds no support in reports of archæological excavations. The only dated piers I know bear the date 1839, but there is an eight-foot pair in Inishowen which, tradition says, had already lost their gates in 1709. The variety of styles and the superstitious beliefs connected with the pillars do strongly suggest that their origin is to be sought far back.

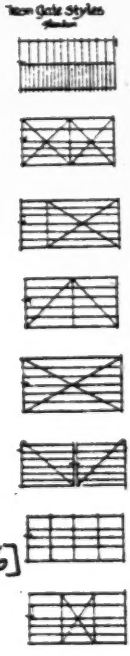

Fig. 12.

I imagine they were used, before the general adoption of fences, to shut off the farmyard from the surrounding open field. Mr. T. G. F. Paterson tells me that in Co. Armagh the gateposts are sometimes referred to as " husband and wife." The most popular shape is cylindrical (Fig. 11), and the average dimensions about three feet in diameter and six feet high. Pretentious specimens may be as high as ten feet. The top is generally finished in a low cone but varies considerably from one district to another: in some parts they are flat-topped " so that the fairies can dance on them." In Co. Meath the usual shape is semi-circular and may have originated in the common practice of building the pillars against a wall at the entrance to the farmyard. In some counties they are square, with a pyramidical roof or a coping of large stones.

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The gates, whether of iron or wood fitted with iron straps, are generally hung in an old-fashioned way: they pivot in a stone socket or " spud-stone," while the top of the heel turns in a perforated stone, nowadays replaced by an iron eye. The gates are not seldom made by the smith, who fashions them out of worn wheel hoops, for instance; and this helps to explain the pleasing absence of standardisation. Fastenings, too, are of many different kinds. Only in a few wooded areas are home-made wooden gates popular: they are light

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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391 326 412 We must visit a factory in the south if we wish to see the single-eared "Irish" spade being made. The country smith may still forge or repair an occasional loy, but the trip-hammer does away with so much heavy sledging that most of the work is concentrated in the "factories." Yet, as the amazing variety of patterns demonstrates, there is no tendency towards specialization: the factory has merely taken over the work of dozens of rural smiths. Thus at least five different types of loy are used in Co. Galway alone. The blade may be straight sided, it may taper slightly or it may expand towards the mouth, and like the two-eared spade it may have a cranked or a round lift; but it is always narrow, ranging in width from 3½ to 5 inches. The loy is in fact a specialized implement, adapted for sod-cutting and ridge-making (Chapter 10); it is not designed to turn over dug soil, and like the two-eared spade which has taken over its functions in the north and east, it enters the ground at an angle and not vertically.

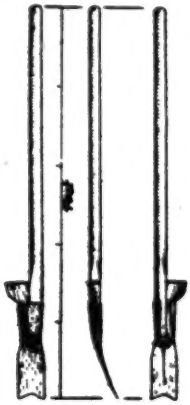

Fig. 63.

412 In the south-west, from Clare round to Kilkenny, the "fack" ends in a fish-tail, presumably to facilitate penetration (Fig. 63). In central Galway the loy has a 14 inch

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the special property of the head of the house and they seem to have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest prehistoric pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthenware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is one of the indications of a common substratum in the early civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitution of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots, as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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412 mouth which opened a way and prevented the blade from wedging.

It was reckoned that twelve men armed with loys could turn an acre a day.[1] This compares not unfavourably with the estimated rate of 'ploughing' with a caschrom, and is nearly twice the speed of spade digging. In the Munster spade the foot-rest is a separate piece of wood which is wedged into the open socket to one side of the shaft, normally the right. The shape of this wedge, and the dimensions and curve of the iron blade, vary from one district to another. When new the spade mouth has two points resembling a fish-tail, or the blade may taper to the mouth to facilitate digging in light gravelly soils. The old Galway spade has its footpiece cut out of a single piece of wood to which a separate handle is attached. This is considered to lessen the shock when the spade is thrust into the ground, and the device is frequently found on old-fashioned turf spades. A curious forked spade formerly common in Mayo also has this feature. This is the 'gowl-gob', a two-eared wooden spade with twin narrow iron-shod blades, and it was reckoned to be very suitable for making ridges in loose sandy or boggy soils (Fig. 43). This may be the last survival of a prehistoric spade, for 'a two-pointed pronged spade' is said to be an ancient Mediterranean tool,[2] and a 'bidente' is used in parts of Spain.

The two-eared iron spade which is replacing the loy in its last lairs has gradually ousted the one-eared spade in most parts of the country during the course of the nineteenth century. But in doing so it has copied even the minor variations of the spades it replaced, so that the spade remains an index of regionalism, a tool of sociological research as well as an in-
●326 strument of labour (Fig. 44). Until water-driven tilt-hammers
412 were introduced for the manufacture of spades—perhaps half
184 a dozen of them are still in operation—they were made by local blacksmiths for local customers. A good spade-maker occasionally won a reputation which might be compared to that of a medieval sword-forger. The smith needed two helpers to hammer out the metal plates, and the work was very heavy.

[1]Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 31.
[2]*The Cambridge Economic History* (Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power), I (1941), 94.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

[1]See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to her that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their [273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured. [554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other 463 *plant products, natural, or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of* 178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of [824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the [825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every [861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The [871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.